



Volume 25, Issue 2

Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance

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Balance is a newsletter produced by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. The EAP is a confidential and free resource, available to you to help manage life's various challenges. If any of the topics below resonant with you, consider contacting your EAP for more information, including referrals for local EAP counselors.

OVERCOME SPRINGTIME STRESSORS

Springtime can often bring a surprising amount of stressors from final exam preparation, graduation planning and festivities, juggling sports schedules, summer social events, college planning, and figuring out summer child care. These increased demands can take a physical and psychological toll. Anxiety or depression can affect you at any time of year, and some say May is one of the most challenging times. Reach out to your EAP for support and resources.

ATTENDANCE ISSUES AT WORK: #1 CAUSE IS DEPRESSION

Do you find yourself missing work for any of the following reasons?

- Lack of energy and motivation
- Not being able to concentrate
- Experiencing feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches, or stomach issues; or feeling so anxious and nervous about interacting with others that you stay home.

Any of these may be related to depression. Talk to your EAP, a doctor, or another professional. An assessment takes only minutes, and there are helpful ways to get you back on the job.

ACCEPTING UPS AND DOWNS WITH RESILIENCY

Life is a series of positive and negative events. Accepting the downs with the ups and moving forward is a resiliency skill. Experiment with the following resilience strategy if frustrating or negative experiences keep you distressed for too long:

- ◆ Understand it is natural to experience negative events more acutely than positive ones.
- ◆ When you face an adverse experience, reflect on past experiences, how you got through them, and how time and patience played a role in overcoming the event.
- ◆ Recognize what's going well in your life. Doing so is a strong counterbalance to negative emotions.
- ◆ Hit the brakes! Refuse to allow an adverse event's power to pull you into a downward spiral.
- ◆ Embrace uncertainty. Life is unpredictable, and there will always be highs and lows. This mindset reinforces your ability to navigate whatever comes your way in the future.



EMOTIONAL LABOR AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STRESS

“Emotional labor” refers to the practice of maintaining a positive attitude and friendly demeanor while working under stress, particularly with difficult and irate customers. Burnout risk is naturally high in such jobs, but a few healthy practices can dramatically improve your resilience.

- Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally with enough rest, healthy eating, and regular exercise.
- Practice focusing on the positive aspects of your job, such as helping customers and solving their problems.
- Practice empathy with customers. It improves their demeanor and leads to positive interactions with you.
- Use more positive language during interactions. It reduces tension, and it de-escalates conflict.
- Seek support. Colleagues, supervisors, and your EAP offer opportunities to vent, process events, and blow off steam. This is normal and healthy. It won't feed cynicism; it's just the opposite—it will help you stay positive and motivated in your job.

DISPEL MYTHS ABOUT ADDICTION

Myths and misconceptions still fuel stigma about alcoholism (now called “alcohol use disorder” or AUD). Are you surprised by any of these myths?

- “Only ‘heavy drinkers’ develop alcohol use disorders.”
Fact: Moderate drinkers can experience health problems related to alcohol, such as liver disease, high blood pressure, and certain cancers.
- “AUD is a choice.” Fact: People do make the choice to drink, but they do not choose to become addicted, which is a disease process.
- “AUD only affects adults.” Fact: Teenage-only alcoholism treatment programs have existed for over 50 years.
- “You can cure an AUD by going cold turkey.” Fact: Delayed withdrawal symptoms can occur weeks, months, or years after the last drink, and they often explain relapse.

If you are struggling with addiction, the EAP is a resource available to you. Reach out today.

REPAIRING A WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIP

If you've experienced an argument with a coworker and feel the need to repair a rough patch in your relationship; how do you proceed? It might feel difficult to make the first move toward repair, but conflict left unresolved can create a toxic work environment, where tensions are high and communication becomes even more strained. Positive relationships at work don't “just happen” and take work to maintain. Start with a statement such as “I want to talk with you about the other day.” Next, take responsibility—for your part in the argument. Apologize for words, actions, tonality, or nonverbal behaviors that caused discomfort. Indicate you want to move forward and listen completely to your coworker's perspective. This active listening may help you grasp their point of view, but more importantly, it may encourage your coworker to reciprocate.

Focus the discussion on the things you both care about and are trying to achieve. Consider agreeing on how to handle conflict in the future—your relationship “protocols” for managing conflict.

TRY THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE FOCUS

The “Pomodoro Technique” might be the ticket if you struggle with distractions and remaining focused on projects. Developed by Francesco Cirillo, a business consultant, the approach to managing time requires a kitchen timer and breaking work into short, focused intervals (typically 25 minutes) called “Pomodoros.” Separate these with five-minute breaks. After four Pomodoros, take a longer break (15-30 minutes). The Pomodoro Technique helps you maintain focus and productivity, but it also helps you avoid burnout and mental fatigue from arduous tasks. There's a bonus; you eventually become more efficient at prioritizing tasks and avoiding distractions even when not using the technique.



BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR KIDS

Raising kids is both rewarding and challenging. Being sensitive and responsive to your children can help you build positive, healthy relationships together. Strong emotional bonds help children learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviors and develop self-confidence. They help create a safe base from which they can explore, learn, and relate to others.

Daily demands and competing priorities can influence your ability to be sensitive and responsive to your child. Some experts are concerned about the effects that distracted parenting may have on emotional bonding and children's language development, social interaction, and safety. If parents are inconsistently available, kids can get distressed and feel hurt, rejected, or ignored. They may have more emotional outbursts and feel alone. They may even stop trying to compete for their parents' attention and start to lose emotional connections to their parents.

As children grow up, it's important to remember that giving them what they need doesn't mean giving them everything they want. Focus on exactly what's going on with your child in the moment. Think about where a child is in life and what skills they need to learn at that time. Perhaps they need help managing emotions, learning how to behave in a certain situation, thinking through a new task, or relating to friends.

If you are struggling with a stage of parenting, your EAP is here to support you.

Source: [NIH - National Institutes of Health](#)

THERE IS HELP FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING

Many problem-gamblers say their first awareness of their addictive disorder was the inability to resist the impulse to gamble despite the consequences. Next came spending more than intended and "chasing losses" to win it back, often with the motive of making amends to others hurt by broken promises to quit or cut back. Problem gambling is a recognized mental disorder, and it is treatable. You can learn more from the National Council on Problem Gambling or by contacting a professional counselor through your EAP.

www.ncpgambling.org

Kepro's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program through Kepro assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. Kepro's life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

The Employee Assistance Program can be accessed anytime, for free, confidential support from a professional consultant or online resource. Call or log on today.

 **Phone: 1.800.833.3031**

 **Website: www.EAPHelplink.com**

 **Company Code: IOWA**

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